signum
CLASSICS
BE all MERRY
The Choral Scholars of
University College Dublin
Irish Chamber Orchestra
Desmond Earley

BE ALL MERRY

1 **In Dulci Jubilo** [3.34]
Matthew Culloton
Words: German Carol

2 **Be All Merry** [3.20]
Eoghan Desmond
Words: 15th-Century English, Traditional
Soloist: Katherine Hunka *violin*

3 **God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen** [1.54]
18th-Century English Carol arr. John Høybye
Words: 18th-Century English Carol

4 **Curoo Curoo** [3.15]
Elaine Agnew
Words: 18th-Century Traditional Irish Christmas Text

5 **The Adoration of the Magi** [5.53]
Tim Stephens orch. Desmond Earley
Words: Traditional Irish prayer
W.B. Yeats
Soloists: Katherine Hunka *violin*, Tristan Russcher *piano*

6 **Suantraí** [2.34]
Fionntán Ó Cearbhaill
Words: Traditional Scottish, trans. Seán Óg Ó Tuama
Soloist: Niamh McCullough *soprano*

7 **The Wexford Carol** [4.52]
Traditional Irish arr. Desmond Earley
Words: Traditional Irish
Soloist: Mark Waters *tenor,* Aoife Nic Athlaoich *cello*

8 **O Magnum Mysterium** [4.33]
Andrej Makor
Words: Responsory at Matins (Lesson IV)
for Christmas Day
Soloists: Eleanor Coleman *soprano,* Max O'Neill *tenor*

9 **Christe, Redemptor Omnium** [5.24]
Ivo Antognini
Words: Hymn for Christmas Vespers
Anon. (probably 6th Century)
Soloists: Declan Wildes *tenor,* Katherine Hunka *violin,*
Aoife Nic Athlaoich *cello*

10 **Cró na Nollag** [2.37]
Adhamhnán Mac Domhnaill
Words: Uinseann Mac Domhnaill
Soloists: Kiri O'Neill *soprano,* Emily Doyle *soprano*

11 **Carol of the Bells** [2.09]
Mykola Leontovych arr. Desmond Earley
Words: Peter Wilhousky

12 **Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas** [2.57]
Hugh Martin arr. Desmond Earley
Words: Ralph Blane
Soloist: Simon Morgan *baritone*

13 **We Toast the Days** [2.53]
Linda Kachelmeier
Words: Linda Kachelmeier
Soloists: Ciaran O'Donovan *tenor*, Ivan O'Neill *baritone*

14 **Auld Lang Syne** [3.52]
Traditional, arr. Desmond Earley
Words: Robert Burns

Total timings [49.49]

THE CHORAL SCHOLARS OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
IRISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
DESMOND EARLEY *Conductor*

INTRODUCTION

As we stand on the edge of another bright new year I take your hand in mine
With assurance of the courage we will find and the hope that leads us on.
Linda Kachelmeier

The post-production phase of this recording project took place as the world grappled with the outbreak of COVID-19. American composer Linda Kachelmeier's piece – *We Toast the Days* – serves as a reminder of the strength, love and hope that resonates throughout the world not simply at Christmastide but also during periods of hardship.

Christmas is a time to connect with family, friends and loved ones to enjoy the magic of the holiday season: this we can all do through the shared gift of music. *Be All Merry* is one of three new pieces especially composed for the Choral Scholars. This lively carol for choir, orchestra and violin by Irish composer Eoghan Desmond evokes the joyful play of Christmas in the lines 'Be all merry in this house/Exultet celum laudibus!'. The disc contains a remarkable setting of the Advent plainsong hymn *Christe, Redemptor omnium* for tenor solo, chorus, violin and violoncello by Ivo Antognini, crafted for Choral Scholars with the kind support of the Swiss Embassy in Dublin. *The Adoration of the Magi* by American composer Timothy Stephens is a breathtaking setting of W. B. Yeats' poetry.

A beautiful Irish-language lullaby – *Cró na Nollag* – set by father and son, Adhamhnán and Uinseann Mac Domhnaill, and the much-loved Scottish tune simply titled *Suantraí*, are also included in our selection for you. We join forces with the Irish Chamber Orchestra for a number of tracks including *The Wexford Carol* and *Carol of the Bells*. The choir closes the album with the song most associated with friendship, hope and the promise of a new year, *Auld Lang Syne* .

May the beauty of this music–our Christmas gift to you–stay with you throughout the season and bring you joy for years to come.

Desmond Earley
Artistic Director, The Choral Scholars of University College Dublin

PROGRAMME NOTES *by Máire Egan-Buffet*

1 *In Dulci Jubilo*
Matthew Culloton

The original melody with its macaronic German and Latin text originated in Leipzig in the fourteenth century. The English translation of the German portions (retaining the Latin) was made by Robert Lucas de Pearsall in 1837. In Matthew Culloton's recent *a cappella* adaptation (2012), we hear the original melody sung four times, twice by the sopranos and once by the tenors and altos. It is woven through a continuously varied texture in which the "sweet joy" expressed in the ancient text is happily sustained.

2 *Be All Merry*
Eoghan Desmond

This setting by the Cork composer Eoghan Desmond was commissioned in 2018. A distinctive feature of its fifteenth-century macaronic text is the combination of English and Latin lines in six rhyming quatrains. In the final line of the concluding rhyming couplet, the opening words of another carol are heard: " *Christe redemptor omnium* ". The English and Latin words are often heard simultaneously as the choral texture is enriched while the solo violin soars ever higher above the singers' expressions of joy in celebration of the Christmas message.

3 *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen*
arr. John Høybye

Dating from the eighteenth century, this traditional English Christmas carol needs no introduction. The Danish composer, John Høybye, also a distinguished choral conductor, captures the joyful spirit underlying its three verses by framing his setting with a lively evocation of bells and he instructs the singers to sing with a smile!

4 *Curoo Curoo*
Elaine Agnew

An eighteenth-century traditional Irish poem forms the basis of this carol. It is also known as the carol of the birds, because three of its four verses refer to the lark, the dove, the redbird and the owl who visit the manger to sing "on Christmas day in the morning" while its refrain concludes with onomatopoeic curoos. In the final verse, the song of the birds is replaced by that of the angels to accompany the arrival of the shepherds. The Irish composer Elaine Agnew wrote this setting in response to a commission by RTÉ (the Irish national broadcaster) in 2008. It is an expressive arrangement for female choir with harp, string orchestra and vibraphone accompaniment, but the wide-eyed owl at Mary's side in the third verse is singled out for more exciting treatment.

5 *The Adoration of the Magi*
W.B. Yeats/Timothy Stephens

W.B. Yeats' *The Adoration of the Magi* (1897) is a short prose essay that concludes with the prayer, written in Gaelic with which Timothy Stephens opens his choral composition. Yeats introduces the prayer thus: "[...] when I pray against the demons I repeat a prayer, which was made I know not how many centuries ago to help some poor Gaelic man or woman who had suffered with a suffering like mine". Although Yeats' prose text makes no explicit reference to the visit of the Magi to the stable at Bethlehem, it does relate a dream in which three old men "in armour studded with rubies", [...] "under the roof of a manger", "bowed very low in front of the woman and the child". Stephens follows his setting of the prayer, with Yeats' poem *The Magi* (1914). This echoes some of the imagery found in his earlier prose text and refers more explicitly to Christ's second coming, Calvary's turbulence and "the uncontrollable mystery/ On the bestial floor." For the *Paidir* , Timothy Stephens captures the style of an old traditional Irish melody and writes for upper voices in unison supported by a solo violin. This leads directly into his beautiful choral setting of Yeats' poem, underpinned by strings and pianoforte with occasional reminiscent flourishes on the solo violin.

6 *Suantraí*
arr. Fionntán O Cearbhaill

Although its lyrics make no direct reference to the Nativity scene, this traditional Scottish lullaby is perfectly suited to the events of Christmas night. For his arrangement of the rocking traditional Scottish tune, the Wexford choral composer, Fionntán O Cearbhaill, set the Irish translation by Seán Óg Ó Tuama of the original Scots-Gaelic text. Introduced and supported by the chamber choir, a solo soprano sings the tune. On its repetition, this time by the choir, it is beautifully adorned by a soaring descant sung by the soloist before the lullaby subsides in an appropriately hushed coda.

7 *The Wexford Carol*
arr. Desmond Earley

Also known as the Enniscorthy Carol, referring to the provincial Wexford town where it was collected by W. H. Grattan Flood (d.1928), this native Irish piece dates back to the twelfth century. Its short verses focus on the scenes surrounding the birth of the Messiah heralded by the prophets as a gift from God "to end all strife".

The traditional Irish melody shines forth in this atmospheric setting scored for solo tenor, choir, strings and continuo. Its beguiling beauty is simply expressed throughout by the solo tenor but with the evocation of the apparition of the angel to the shepherds, the choir weaves its lines in a free rendition.

8 *O Magnum Mysterium*
Andrej Makor

Perhaps the earliest musical setting of this brief Latin text was heard as the Gregorian chant that forms the fourth responsory in the Office preceding the Mass for Christmas Day. It focuses on the awesome mystery of the birth of the Saviour to the Virgin Mary in a stable surrounded by animals. The Slovenian composer, Andrej Makor, set this text in 2014 for mixed choir. The music wonderfully sustains the sense of awe and mystery throughout, culminating in a series of Alleluias before subsiding into a final recall of the *Magnum mysterium* with which it began.

9 *Christe, Redemptor Omnium*
Ivo Antognini

This work by its Swiss composer was commissioned by the Choral Scholars and first performed in 2018. An ancient plainsong version of the hymn beginning *Jesu, Redemptor omnium,* is part of the church's official liturgical music for Christmas Vespers. Antognini's text is often substantially different and his original thematic material merely evokes the distinctive character of plainsong. The hymn is set for tenor solo, six-part choir, solo violin and violoncello. The alternation of the melodic lines between the soloist and the choir's soprano serves to articulate clearly each of the seven verses and the music of the final verse recalls that of the opening, masterfully rescored to provide a tutti conclusion.

10 *Cró na Nollag*
Adhamhnán Mac Domhnaill

With this Irish carol, composed in 2007 we are brought once more into the stable in Bethlehem to welcome the sleeping infant, the King of Kings. A solo soprano sings a gentle, peaceful rocking melody supported throughout by the choir's sustained, hushed chords.

11 *Carol of the Bells*
arr. Desmond Earley

The origins of this popular carol lie in an old Ukrainian folk chant. Since it was set in 1919 by Mykola Leontovych, the tune has been heard in over 150 arrangements world-wide. Desmond Earley's setting for choir and orchestra highlights its repeated four-note figure in the vibraphone's introductory measures. This distinctive rhythmic pattern is maintained throughout the piece in order to depict Christmas bells as *"On, on they sound [...] their joyful tone to every home"* and *"Tell all the world Jesus is King".*

12 *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas*
arr. Desmond Earley

This song, composed by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blaine was first heard in the 1944 musical *Meet me in St. Louis* sung by Judy Garland. In Desmond Earley's warm arrangement, a baritone solo carries the melody richly supported by the choir.

13 *We Toast the Days*
Linda Kachelmeier

The music and text of this gentle secular carol setting by the Minnesota composer and arranger was written in 2016 to toast the arrival of the New Year "when the clock strikes twelve and another year is gone". Its three verses are sung unaccompanied by the male voices of the choir to a traditional Celtic melody introduced by a solo tenor while the refrain, introduced with distinctive alternating duple and triple rhythm, begins by toasting "the days both good and bad while the night is long and the bitter cold is come".

14 *Auld Lang Syne*
arr. Desmond Earley

For decades, on these islands, the passage from the old to the new year at midnight has been celebrated by singing Robert Burns' poem. This was first printed in 1788 although the author himself acknowledged that its origins lie in an earlier Scots-language ballad printed in 1711 by James Wilson. In this graceful arrangement, we hear the standard English version of the text set to a traditional Scottish melody. Sopranos and altos predominate in the four verses, sometimes in unison and, at times, underpinned by a Scottish-sounding drone. In contrast, the chorus is richly sung by the full complement of voices.

Notes by Máire Egan-Buffet

1 In Dulci Jubilo

In dulci jubilo, *(In sweet joy,)*
Let us our homage show,
Our heart's joy reclineth
In praesepio, *(In a manger,)*
And like a bright star shineth,
Matris in gremio. *(In your mother's lap.)*
Alpha es et O. *(Beginning and ending.)*

O Jesu parvule! *(O infant Jesus!)*
I yearn for thee always!
Hear me, I beseech thee,
O Puer optime! *(O best of boys!)*
My pray'r let it reach thee,
O Princeps gloriae; *(O Prince of Glory;)*
Trahe me post te. *(Draw me after you.)*

O Patris caritas! *(O love of the Father!)*
O Nati lenitas! *(O mercy of the Son!)*
Deeply were we stained,
Per nostra crimina; *(Through our sins;)*
But thou hast for us gained
Coelorum gaudia! *(The joys of heaven!)*
O that we were there!

Ubi sunt gaudia, *(Where are joys,)*
Where, if they be not there?
There are angels singing
Nova cantica! *(New songs!)*
And there the bells are ringing
In regis curia *(In the King's courts)*
O that we were there,
In dulci jubilo! *(In sweet joy!)*

2 Be All Merry

To bliss God bring us all and some,
Christe, Redemptor omnium. *(Christ, redeemer of us all.)*

In Bethlehem, in that fair city,
A Child was born of our Lady,
Lord and prince that He should be,
A solis ortus cardine. *(From the rising of the sun.)*

Children were slain full great plenty,
Jesus for the Love of Thee;
Let us never damned be,
Hostis Herodes impie. *(The enemy, wicked Herod.)*

He was born of our lady,
without stain of her body,
Goddes son that sitteth on high,
Jesu Salvator Seculi. *(Jesus, eternal saviour.)*

As the sun shineth through the glass,
So Jesus in her body was;
To serve Him He gave us grace.
O lux beata trinitas! *(O Trinity of blessed light!)*

Now is born our Lord Jesus,
That made merry all of us,
Be all merry in this house,
Exultet celum laudibus! (*Let the heavens ring with praise!)*

3 God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

God rest ye merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray;
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy!

In Bethlehem, Judea,
this blessed babe was born,
And laid within a manger
Upon this blessed morn,
To which his mother Mary
Did nothing take in scorn,
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy!

From God our Heavenly Father
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name:
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy!

4 Curoo Curoo

Full many a bird did wake and fly Curoo curoo curoo
Full many a bird did wake and fly
To the manger bed with a wand'ring cry
On Christmas day in the morning Curoo curoo curoo

The lark, the dove, the red bird came Curoo curoo curoo
The lark, the dove, the red bird came
And they did sing in sweet Jesus' name
On Christmas day in the morning Curoo curoo curoo

The owl was there with eyes so wide Curoo curoo curoo
The owl was there with eyes so wide
And he did sit at sweet Mary's side,
On Christmas day in the morning Curoo curoo curoo

The shepherds knelt upon the hay Curoo, curoo, curoo
The shepherds knelt upon the hay
And angels sang the night away
On Christmas day in the morning Curoo curoo curoo

5 The Adoration of the Magi

Seacht bpaidreacha fo' seacht
Chuir Muire faoina Mac,
Chuir Brighid faoina brat,
Chuir Dia faoina neart,
Eidir sinn 'san Sluagh Sidhe
Eidir sinn 'san Sluagh Gaoith.

(Seven times seven prayers
Mary offered for her Son,
Bridget put under her mantle,
God put under His strength,
Between us and the fairy host,
Between us and the demons of the air.)

Now as at all times, I can see in the mind's eye,
In their stiff, painted clothes, the Pale unsatisfied ones
Appear and disappear,
In the blue depths of the sky.
With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten stones,
And all their helms of Silver,
Hovering side by side,
And all their eyes still fixed
Hoping to find once more,
Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,
Mystery, the uncontrollable mystery,
On the bestial floor.

6 Suantraí

Seo thó, seo thú-ló …

Mo ghaol mo ghrá, 'gus m'eaduil thú!
Mo stóirín úr is m'fhéirin thú!
Mo mhacán álainn scéimheach thú.
Chan fiú mé féin bheith 'd dháil.

(My love and my treasure, my new sweetheart,my precious gift
My beautiful little son.I am not worthy to be beside you)

Alleluia, Alleluia ...

Seo thó, seo thú-ló ...

7 The Wexford Carol

Good people all, this Christmas time,
Consider well and bear in mind
What our good God for us has done,
In sending his beloved son.
With Mary holy we should pray
To God with love this Christmas day;
In Bethlehem upon that morn
There was a blessed Messiah born.

The night before that happy tide
The noble Virgin and her guide
Were long time seeking up and down
To find a lodging in the town.
But mark how all things came to pass
From ev'ry door repell'd, Alas!
As long foretold, their refuge all
Was but a lowly oxen stall.

Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep
Their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep;
To whom God's angels did appear,
Which put the shepherds in great fear.
'Prepare and go' the angel said;
'to Bethlehem, be not afraid!
For there you'll find this happy morn,
A princely babe, sweet Jesus born!'

With thankful heart and joyful mind
The shepherds went the babe to find,
And as God's angel had foretold,
They did our Saviour Christ behold.
Within a manger he was laid,
And by His side a Virgin Maid,
Attending on the Lord of Life,
Who came on earth to end all strife.

8 O Magnum Mysterium

O magnum mysterium,
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,
jacentem in præsepio!
Beata Virgo
cujus viscera meruerunt portare Dominum Christum.
Alleluia!

(O great mystery,
and wonderful sacrament,
that the animals might see the birth of the Lord,
lying in a manger!
Blessed is the Virgin
whose womb was worthy to carry Christ the Lord.
Alleluia!)

9 Christe, Redemptor Omnium

Christe, Redemptor omnium, ex Patre, Patris unice,
solus ante principium natus ineffabiliter,

Tu lumen, tu splendor Patris, tu spes perennis omnium,
intende quas fundunt preces tui per orbem servuli.

Salutis auctor, recole quod nostri quondam corporis,
Ex illibata Virgine nascendo, formam sumpseris.

Hic praesens testatur dies, currens per anni circulum,
Quod a solus sede Patris mundi salus adveneris;

Hunc caelum, terra, hunc mare, hunc omne quod in eis est,
Auctorem adventus tui laudat exsultans cantico.

Nos quoque, qui sancto tuo redempti sumus sanguine,
Ob diem natalis tui hymnum novum concinimus.

Jesu, tibi sit gloria, qui natus es de Virgine,
cum Patre et almo Spiritu, in sempiterna saecula. Amen.

Christ, Redeemer of all, begotten by the Father
Before light was created His equal in glory.

You the Father's light and radiance, You humanity's unfailing hope
Accept the prayers of your servants the world over.

Hail to You, our salvation's author, that long ago you took the form
Out of a young Virgin, of our own body, and were born.

The present day, as it comes round every year, bears witness
To this-that You, the only-begotten of the Father, have come to be man's salvation.

The heavens, the earth, the sea, And every creature under heaven,
Praise Him with a new song as the author of new salvation.

And we too, cleansed by the redeeming stream of Your holy blood,
Make this gift of a hymn of praise on Your birthday.

Jesus, glory be to you, born of the Virgin;
Whom with the Father and Spirit we adore forevermore. Amen.

10 Cró na Nollag

Cró na Nollag ins an oíche, bhfeiceann tú an leanbh Íosa,
Réalt ag soilsiú 'nuas go rí-gheal, Rí na Cruinne ar an tsaol.
Glór na n-aingeal oíche naofa, Síochain Chríost ar na mílte
Leanbh Íosa ina luí, Muire Máthair 'tá ag guí,
Sin é losaf lena taobh, Mór an aoibhneas ar a chroí.
Fáilte's fial roimh Rí na Ríthe, Fáilte 'rís is fáilte choí

The Christmas stable in the night, Do you see the infant Jesus,
A Star is shining brightly from above, The King of the Universe is born.
The angels' voices this holy night, The peace of Christ to everyone .
Baby Jesus lying still, Mother Mary deep in prayer,
Joseph there by her side, His heart filled with joy.
Welcome now, King of Kings Welcome again and welcome forever.

11 Carol of the Bells

Hark how the bells, sweet silver bells,
All seem to say, throw cares away
Christmas is here, bringing good cheer,
To young and old, meek and the bold.
Ding dong ding dong, that is their song
With joyful ring, all caroling.
One seems to hear, words of good cheer
From everywhere, filling the air.
Oh how they pound, raising the sound,
O'er hill and dale, telling their tale.
Gaily they ring, while people sing
Songs of good cheer, Christmas is here.
Merry, Merry, Merry, Merry Christmas,
On on they sound, on without end,
Their joyful tone, to every home.
Ring Christmas bells, merrily ring,
Tell all the world Jesus is king!

12 Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

Have yourself a merry little Christmas,
Let your heart be light,
Next year all our troubles will be out of sight.

Have yourself a merry little Christmas,
Make the yuletide gay,
Next year all our troubles will be miles away.

Here we are as in olden days,
Happy golden days of yore,
Faithful friends who were dear to us
Gather near to us once more.

Someday soon we all will be together
If the fates allow;
Until then, we'll have to muddle through somehow,
So have yourself a merry little Christmas now.

13 We Toast the Days

When the clock strikes twelve
and another year has gone,
I give a kiss to you,
As remembrance of the past we have shared
And the future yet to come.

We toast the days,
Both good and bad,
The old friends and the new.
When the clock strikes twelve
and another year has gone,
I give a kiss to you.

While the night is long
and the bitter cold has come,
We lengthen our embrace
To sustain us as we mourn our regrets
And the fear of days unknown.

We toast the days,
Both good and bad,
The old friends and the new.
While the night is long
and the bitter cold has come,
I give a kiss to you.

As we stand on the edge
of another bright new year,
I take your hand in mine
With assurance of the courage we will find
and the hope that leads us on.

We toast the days,
Both good and bad,
The old friends and the new.
As we stand on the edge
of another bright new year,
I give a kiss to you.

14 Auld Lang Syne

Should old acquaintance be forgot, and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot, and auld lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear, for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet for auld lang syne.

And surely you'll buy your pint cup, and surely I'll buy mine!
And we'll take a cup of kindness yet, for auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne …

We two have paddled in the stream, from morning sun 'till dine;
But seas between us broad have roared since auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne …

And there's a hand my trusty friend! And gi'es a hand o' thine!
We'll take a right goodwill draught, for auld lang syne!

For auld lang syne …

THE CHORAL SCHOLARS OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Soprano
Eleanor Coleman
Alice Morgan
Sadhbh McCarrick
Kiri O'Neill
Emily Doyle*
Niamh McCullough*
Hazel Conway*

Alto
Emma Arthur
Seoirse Claffey
Rose Higgins
Caitríona Sherlock
Caitríona Timmins
Abby Molloy*
Sarah Thursfield*

Tenor
Stephen Allen
Lorcan McDonnell
Maximilian O'Neill
Declan Wildes*
Glenn Murphy*

Bass
Gavin Coll
Luke McMonagle
Fearghus Montague
Ivan O'Neill
Harry Watchorn
Simon Morgan*
Matt Gibbons*

*Denotes alumni member of The Choral Scholars of University College Dublin

The Choral Scholars is an internationally acclaimed chamber choir of gifted student singers led by founding Artistic Director, Dr Desmond Earley, based at University College Dublin College of Arts & Humanities. Scholars come from various academic disciplines and commit to an intensive programme of choral study. Throughout each semester they receive intense vocal coaching, language instruction, and performance-practice studies.

Since its formation in 1999, the choir has maintained strong links with its family of over 200 alumni who often return to perform with the ensemble on the national and international concert stage. With a classical focus and an inspiration found in the music and literature of Ireland, the ensemble's repertoire ranges from contemporary choral music to the re-imagining of Irish traditional song. The Choral Scholars are recognised for their strong national identity, artistic excellence, ambitious vision, a joyful camaraderie and a dynamic, youthful sound.

The choir frequently performs with Ireland's leading instrumentalists and orchestras and has in recent years collaborated with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, the Irish Chamber Orchestra and the European Union Chamber Orchestra. In touring the Netherlands, Hungary, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, the group has brought University College Dublin and its music to an international audience. The choir regularly broadcasts on television and radio. Notable recent appearances include Centenary (RTÉ), for which the ensemble provided the choral soundtrack, and concerts with Hans Zimmer and Ennio Morricone. In March 2019, they marked their 20th Anniversary at their debut at New York's Carnegie Hall.

The performance and commissioning of works by living composers is a hallmark of this ensemble. New compositions have been written for the group by Ivo Antognini, Seán Doherty, Eoghan Desmond, Desmond Earley, Damien Geter, Colin Mawby, Michael McGlynn, Natasa Paulberg, Timothy Stephens, and Bill Whelan.

Be All Merry is their third album on Signum Classics following the hit release *Invisible Stars* (2015) and *Perpetual Twilight* (2019), featuring a collection of traditional and contemporary choral music from Ireland and Scotland, including new arrangements and compositions by some of Ireland's most celebrated composers.

Artistic Director: **Desmond Earley**
Ensemble Manager: **Aoife Perry**

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DESMOND EARLEY
Artistic Director, The Choral Scholars of University College Dublin

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Hailed by The Irish Times as 'enterprising and wide-ranging', Desmond Earley, Artistic Director of the Choral Scholars of University College Dublin, has established a reputation as one of Ireland's foremost choral directors and early-keyboard specialists.

Desmond is a lecturer in Performance Studies at University College Dublin (UCD). In 2017-2018 he was Visiting Scholar at Lewis & Clark College, Oregon (USA) and Guest Conductor/Scholar at Bowdoin College, Maine (USA).

As an instrumentalist and director, Desmond works with many of the world's finest orchestras including the Irish Chamber Orchestra, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Irish Baroque Orchestra, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, European Union Chamber Orchestra and English Chamber Orchestra. Desmond has also collaborated with some of the world's great musicians including Sir James Galway, Roy Goodman, Christopher Hogwood, Monica Huggett, and Konrad Junghaenel.

As a celebrated composer and arranger, Desmond has published works with Music Sales (UK), Hal Leonard Corporation (USA), Alliance Music (USA) and with Seolta Music (IRL) where he serves as editor of the international 'College Choral Series'.

His acclaimed work *Body of the Moon* (2017) based on a setting of texts by Galileo Galilei, was commissioned by All Classical Portland Radio (USA) for the total solar eclipse across the United States of America. He has created special arrangements for renowned ensembles including the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, the Portland Symphony Orchestra (Maine, USA), Tenebrae (UK), and the Irish Baroque Orchestra.

www.desmondearley.ie

IRISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

First Violins
Katherine Hunka *Leader*
Cliodhna Ryan
Louis Roden
Anita Vedres

Second Violins
Kenneth Rice
Lynda O'Connor
Jane Hackett

Violas
Mark Coates Smith
Robin Panter

Cellos
Aoife Nic Athlaoich
Aoife Burke

Double Bass
Aura Stone

Flute
Miriam Kaczor

Oboe
Daniel Bates

Clarinet
John Forde

Bassoon
Hilary Sheil

Horns
Cuan Ó Seireadáin
Dewi Jones

Percussion
Brian Dungan

Harp
Geraldine O'Doherty

The Irish Chamber Orchestra is Ireland's most dynamic ensemble. Mixing traditional repertoire with new commissions, and collaborating with everyone from DJs to dance companies, the ICO pushes the boundaries of what a chamber orchestra can do. You are as likely to find the ICO at *Electric Picnic* as *Mozartfest*, but wherever it performs, the ICO delivers world-class concerts feted for its energy and style.

Each year, the ICO presents concert seasons in both Limerick and Dublin, embarks on two national tours, and makes a number of prestigious international appearances. Their Artistic Committee works closely with Jorg Widmann (*Principal Conductor/Artistic Partner*) and Katherine Hunka (*Leader*), to devise exciting, diverse and innovative programmes, mixing standard repertoire with new work – often specially commissioned – from the best young Irish composers. This versatile approach enables the ICO to appeal to music fans of every stripe while upholding the highest artistic standards.

Their groundbreaking initiative, *Sing Out with Strings* (SOWS), offers primary school children in Limerick the chance to learn music. The runaway success of SOWS has inspired them to set up a youth orchestra, the ICOYO, which provides aspiring musicians aged twelve to eighteen years with the support they need to grow. The orchestra has made its home at the University of Limerick for over twenty years, and is deeply involved in the MA in Classical String Performance, supporting young talent through workshops and masterclasses.

The ICO is orchestra-in-residence at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick, and is funded by The Arts Council of Ireland/An Chomhairle Ealaion.

www.irishchamberorchestra.com

SÍLE MCCARTHY-CANNON
Voice Coach

Síle McCarthy-Cannon is Adjunct Lecturer in vocal studies at University College Dublin School of Music and has been voice coach to the Choral Scholars since 2009, working with the group's Artistic Director, Desmond Earley, on developing and maintaining the choir's distinctive sound. A performer with many years of experience, McCarthy-Cannon is in high demand in Ireland as a voice technician. She taught vocal technique and singing for seven years on the acting courses at the Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College Dublin, has worked with students in the Gaiety School of Acting, and is a guest coach on University College Dublin's *Ad Astra Academy* music programme. Prior to her move into the field of teaching, she worked extensively as a recital artist in Ireland, performing Lieder, Chanson, Aria and Art Song.

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THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

The UCD School of Music traces its origins to the establishment of a Chair of Music in 1914, with the first incumbent being the German cleric and scholar Heinrich Bewerunge, former Professor of Chant and Organ at St Patrick's College Maynooth. Subsequent Chairs have sought to establish the School's credentials as a major centre for musical scholarship in Ireland. The current faculty of musicologists, ethnomusicologists and practitioners delivers a comprehensive teaching programme, while maintaining a formidable reputation for innovative research activity and graduate mentorship. The culture of musical performance has prospered in the past two decades, notably through the success and acclaim for the UCD Symphony Orchestra and Choral Scholars, among a total of six professionally-led ensembles. Via their concerts and recordings, UCD School of Music has made its presence known throughout the campus of Ireland's largest university, as well as on the national and international stage.

The Choral Scholars of University College Dublin rely on a network of supporters, advisers and artistic partners to deliver an ambitious programme of musical activity each year. For more information, please contact the Ensemble Manager at **choralscholars@ucd.ie**

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